

V. COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

A. LIST OF PREPARERS

The following is a list of key personnel responsible for the preparation of the EA.

Federal Highway Administration

James F. Linker, *Procedural Guidance / Document Review*

Maine Department of Transportation

Judith Lindsey-Foster, *Document Review*

Rhonda Waterman, *Conceptual Design*

Andy MacDonald, *Conceptual Design*

Mike Burns, *Conceptual Design & Document Review*

Lisa Dickson, *Document Review*

Carl Croce, *Traffic*

Ed Hanscom, *Traffic*

Sylvia Michaud, *Mitigation*

Gannett Fleming, Inc.

William M. Plumptre, *Document Preparation*

Craig S. Shirk, *Natural Environment Studies*

Scott W. Duncanson, AICP, *Social Environment Studies*

Harvey S. Knauer, PE, PLS, *Air Quality and Noise Analysis*

John A. Ames, *Technical Editing and Document Layout*

Richard A. Pugh, CE, *Quality Assurance \ Quality Control*

Debra L. Plumptre, PG, *Geology and Groundwater*

KM CHNG Environmental, Inc.

Al Goldman, *Air Quality*

Chris Maxon, *Noise*

B. AGENCY COORDINATION

At the beginning of the study, letters were sent to various federal, state, and local agencies in accordance with the procedural provisions of NEPA and MDOT's requirements for early coordination. Early coordination letters describing the project and proposed studies were mailed to 33 agencies in August, 1995, to notify them of the proposed project, request specific information, and encourage participation in the study by identifying initial concerns (Table V-1). Copies of the responses received are included in Appendix A.

C. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public participation was initiated early in the study to allow incorporation of public comments and concerns into the development and analysis of project alternatives and was continued throughout the environmental assessment process.

1. Public Meetings

Initially, a public meeting in support of MDOT's request to the FHWA to intersect the Interstate system was held on April 8, 1993, by the City of Bangor. This meeting was held, in conjunction with MDOT, to present proposals for a new interchange at Stillwater Avenue. This meeting provided an opportunity for the public to become informed of the basic goals and objectives of the project as well as the proposed interchange concepts. The meeting provided a forum for the public to ask questions and express concerns on the proposed project. The project received broad public support at this meeting.

An informational meeting to update the public on the status of the project was held on September 21, 1995, in Rangely Hall of the Eastern Maine Technical College. Thirty-six citizens, business leaders, and government officials attended. A question and answer period was included for the public to pose questions and state comments and concerns. The following issues were raised by the attendees:

- Traffic impacts on residential areas.
- Land development impacts on Stillwater Avenue.
- MDOT funding for project alternatives.
- Road improvements along Stillwater Avenue—extra lanes, widening of bridge.
- Pedestrian and bicycle circulation concerns, especially with Alternative 2.
- Elevation of new road structures.
- Radius of proposed ramps.
- Lighting of proposed improvements.

The opportunity to submit written comments was provided; nine written responses were submitted by attendees. The major items of concern were relocations of homes and businesses, land use, air quality, noise, visual impact, and economic development. Specific comments and suggestions included: preparation of a cost benefit analysis, concerns about increased traffic on residential areas along Stillwater Avenue, traffic circulation through Howard Street, potential development and the loss of open space along Stillwater Avenue, levels of noise and vibration, and right-of-way and private property issues.

2. Public Hearing

A public hearing for the proposed project was held on January 26, 1999 in Rangely Hall of the Eastern Maine Technical College. Approximately 50 citizens, business leaders, and government officials attended. The hearing consisted of a presentation describing the project followed by verbal testimony from the public. The presentation consisted of introductions of the speakers and responsibilities, a review of the strategies considered in accordance with the Sensible Transportation Policy Act, a description of the NEPA process, a description of the comments received from the public meeting held in September 1995 and the changes in the project as a result of the comments received, a description of the alternatives being considered by the MDOT and their environmental impacts, a description of the design and construction of the Preferred Alternative, and a description of the right-of-way appraisal and acquisition process.

On behalf of the city of Bangor, the city engineer voiced their support for the project.

Nine people asked questions and offered comments at the public hearing. The questions and comments included: the cost of construction and the sources of funding for the project, clarification of the prohibition of left turns from the two off-ramps to Stillwater Avenue toward the downtown portion of the city, the impact of traffic to the residential areas along Drew Lane and Howard Street, the reasons why the I-95 southbound on-ramp was moved, the cost of the I-95 northbound on-ramp, and the circumstances needed for the future construction of an I-95 northbound on-ramp within the proposed interchange.

Following the public hearing, six letters or comment forms were received. A copy of the comment letters and forms received are included in this section of the EA.

The comments received at the public hearing and during the comment period were reviewed and considered during the preparation of this Final EA.

Table V-1, Summary of Early Coordination Letters

Agency	Information Requested	Information Received
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (August 9, 1995)	General Letter	No response received
U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (August 16, 1995)	List of hydric soils, prime farmlands, soils of statewide importance, and unique soils for Penobscot County, ME	September 5, 1995—List of hydric soils, prime farmlands, and additional farmlands of statewide importance.
U.S. Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service (August 17, 1995)	General Letter	September 25, 1995—No impact on resources of concern.
U.S. Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service (August 17, 1995)	Identification of threatened or endangered species and critical habitats	August 29, 1995—No threatened or endangered species or critical habitats in the project area.
U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service (August 9, 1995)	General Letter	September 7, 1995—Phone conversation. No concerns noted.
U.S. Department of the Interior Office of Environmental Project Review (August 9, 1995)	General Letter	No response received
U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration (August 9, 1995)	General Letter	No response received
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region I (August 17, 1995)	General Letter	No response received
Maine Department of Agriculture (August 9, 1995)	General Letter	No response received
Maine Department of Conservation Natural Areas Program (August 9, 1995)	List of sensitive or unique features of concern	September 25, 1995—No rare botanical or Registered Critical Areas within the project area.
Maine Department of Economic and Community Development — State Floodplain Management Center (August 9, 1995)	Identification of floodplain, flood hazard, and flood prone areas	No response received
Maine Department of Environmental Protection (August 9, 1995)	Identification of threatened or endangered species and critical habitats	August 21, 1995—Request forwarded to Bangor regional office.
Maine Department of Environmental Protection (August 9, 1995)	General Letter	September 1, 1995—Request forwarded to Bangor regional office.
Maine Department of Environmental Protection — Air Quality Control (August 9, 1995)	General Letter	No response received
Maine Department of Environmental Protection — Hazardous Materials and Solid Waste Control (August 9, 1995)	Identification of areas of known or potential areas of hazardous waste or materials or previous remedial actions	No response received
Maine Department of Environmental Protection — Land Quality Control (August 9, 1995)	Identification of threatened and endangered species and critical habitats	No response received

Table V-1, Summary of Early Coordination Letters (*continued*)

Agency	Information Requested	Information Received
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (August 9, 1995)	Identification of threatened and endangered species and critical habitats	August 21, 1995—Request forwarded to Sidney regional office.
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Fishery Division (August 16, 1995)	Identification of threatened or endangered species and critical habitats	September 7, 1995—No known listed or proposed threatened or endangered inland fish species or critical fish habitats occur within the project area.
Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Wildlife Division (August 16, 1995)	Identification of threatened or endangered species and critical habitats	August 24, 1995—No essential habitats within the project area. One state significant wildlife habitat noted in project area.
Maine Department of Marine Resources (August 17, 1995)	General Letter	No response received
Maine Department of Transportation — Division Office (August 9, 1995)	General Letter	No response received
Maine Executive Department - State Planning Office (August 9, 1995)	General Letter	No response received
Maine Geologic Survey (August 9, 1995)	General Letter	No response received
Maine, Office of the Governor (August 9, 1995)	General Letter	No response received
BACTS (August 9, 1995)	General Letter	No response received
Bangor International Airport (August 9, 1995)	General Letter	No response received
City of Bangor — Economic Development Department (August 9, 1995)	General Letter	No response received
City of Bangor — Engineering Department (August 9, 1995)	General Letter	No response received
City of Bangor — Fire Department (August 9, 1995)	Identification of changes to response times and patterns	No response received
City of Bangor — Planning Department (August 9, 1995)	General Letter	October 3, 1995—expressed support of the project and concerns with the configuration of the interchange and coordination with other highway improvements
City of Bangor — Police Department (August 9, 1995)	Identification of changes in response times and patterns	No response received
City of Bangor — Tax Assessors Department (August 9, 1995)	General Letter	No response received
Maine Audubon Society (August 9, 1995)	General Letter	No response received



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 1
JOHN F. KENNEDY FEDERAL BUILDING
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02203-0001

February 5, 1999

Ms. Judith Lindsey-Foster
State of Maine
Maine Department of Transportation
16 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0016

RE: Draft Environmental Assessment
I-95 Interchange with Stillwater Avenue in Bangor, Maine

Dear Ms. Lindsey-Foster:

I have reviewed the draft environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed I-95/Stillwater interchange in Bangor, Maine and offer the following comments for incorporation into the final EA.

Section III.B.4. - Wildlife:

The EA states that according to Maine Division of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W) records there is one area in the western portion of the study area that is a candidate for classification as significant wildlife habitat however there is no mention of what kind of habitat this is. This final EA should provide a description of the kind of habitat located in this area (i.e. deer wintering yard, waterfowl/wading bird habitat, T&E habitat, etc.).

Section IV.B.5. and 6. - Physical and Biological Environment:

Item 5 states that aquatic habitat would not be impacted however Item 6 states that the preferred alternative would impact about 0.5 acres of wetland. Since wetlands are waters of the U.S. and waters of the State of Maine the statement in section 5 (aquatic habitat would not be impacted) is incorrect. These two sections should be combined since aquatic habitat will in fact be impacted by the preferred alternative.

Section IV.E.1. - Secondary Impacts:

Secondary land use impacts have been evaluated by the City of Bangor in its land use plan for properties within the designated area for commercial development (areas surrounding the Maine Mall). On Page IV-8, the EA describes different lands that would be urbanized due to increased commercialization of the area. However, there is no reference to the amount of wetland that would be impacted. Rough estimates of wetland that could be lost due to this development could be obtained from NWI maps or

other mapping efforts that have been done in the area and should be included in the final EA.

This section of the EA also states, "No wetlands of substantial size are anticipated to be impacted based on the premise that wetland impacts from other actions would require separate approvals". This statement should be changed to simply state, "Wetland impacts associated with other actions in the area will require separate approvals". Again, if MDOT has information pertaining to the wetlands that would be impacted through other projects that would lead it to believe that "no wetlands of substantial size would be impacted" this should be provided in the EA. Otherwise it would be best if the EA simply stated that future actions would need to obtain separate approvals.

Section IV.E.2. - Cumulative Impacts:

This section of the EA refers to several projects that may be pursued by the MDOT in the future. These include: widening of I-95 to three lanes, improvements to the Kittridge Road/Stillwater Avenue intersection, and the construction of a parallel service road to the northwest of Stillwater Avenue. In the EA, the MDOT should give the status of these projects with regards to when they might be constructed. Additionally, estimates of wetland impacts associated with each would be useful.

Section IV.F.1. and 2. - Compensation:

This section of the EA describes the commitments by the MDOT to provide mitigation for unavoidable wetland impacts (in this case 0.5 acres). As we have stated at previous MDOT meetings if the preferred alternative is carried forward we would view the wetland impacts associated with this project as minimal and would not recommend that the Corps require compensatory mitigation. We commend the MDOT for taking all efforts to avoid and minimize wetland impacts associated with this project. During the early planning stages of this project the "preferred alternative" would have impacted approximately 1.7 acres of wetland however through additional work the impacts have been reduced by about 1.2 acres.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this project. If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of these comments in further detail please contact me at (617) 918-1562.

Sincerely,



Daniel J. Arsenault

cc: Stacie Beyer; MDEP, Bangor, ME
Jay Clement; USACOE, Manchester, ME
Wende Mahaney; USFWS, Old Town, ME

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
MEMORANDUM

NEW ENGLAND FIELD OFFICES
22 BRIDGE STREET - UNIT # 1
CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03301-4986

January 13, 1999

TO: Judith Lindsey-Foster

FROM: Wende Mahaney, Fish and Wildlife Biologist *WSM*

SUBJECT: Draft Environmental Assessment, I-95 Interchange with Stillwater Avenue, City of Bangor, PIN 4926.00

I have reviewed the subject Draft EA and offer the following brief comments for your consideration in preparing the Final EA:

1. Section Three - Affected Environment, 4. Wildlife

This section should include more than just a discussion of "special" wildlife habitats under Maine's NRPA. That discussion really doesn't give the reader a sense for what is present in the study area for wildlife habitat. I suggest that this section incorporate a brief description of the habitat types present in the project area, including both uplands and wetlands. Based on the habitats that are present (i.e., vegetative cover types, which are already described in the Draft EA in 3. Vegetation) and the setting (i.e., in an urban area adjacent to an interstate highway), you should briefly describe what types of wildlife would be expected to use these habitats. This description can be supplemented with any wildlife observations made during various site visits, but any type of wildlife survey is not warranted. This section should also discuss the 5.0 acres of "undeveloped wildlife habitat" that are referenced in Table II-2.

In the discussion of state designated significant wildlife habitats, you should identify what type of "candidate" habitat occurs near the study area (i.e., is it waterfowl and wading bird habitat? deer wintering habitat?, etc.).

2. Section Four - Environmental Consequences and Mitigation, B, 4. Wildlife

This section should be expanded to include a brief discussion of those types of wildlife habitat (and the associated critters) that would be lost or disturbed from project construction (i.e., the "candidate" significant wildlife habitat is not the only habitat type that should be discussed here). For example, what are the implications of the loss of the 5 acres of "undeveloped wildlife habitat" referenced in Table II-2?

Also, the first sentence in the second paragraph (discussing a depredation permit) doesn't seem to read right; a word or two may be missing or jumbled.

3. Section Four - Environmental Consequences and Mitigation, E, 1. Secondary Impacts

The discussion of potential wetland impacts resulting from additional development that may follow after the new interchange is built is a bit confusing. You seem to argue that wetland impacts of "substantial size" would not be expected because any such future developments (e.g., a new strip mall on Stillwater Ave.) would require a wetland permit. The need to obtain a permit doesn't necessarily preclude the occurrence of "substantial" wetland impacts (and what does "substantial" mean?).

Does existing soils information or National Wetland Inventory mapping (or other available data) indicate any wetland areas within those parcels that are identified as having future development potential? Perhaps the best that can be done for this discussion is to identify and describe any known wetlands that occur in this area and to say that they might be impacted by future development.

4. Section Four - Environmental Consequences and Mitigation, F., 1. Compensation

If the preferred alternative (#4) with an identified wetland impact of 0.5 acres is the project ultimately permitted by the Corps of Engineers, the Fish and Wildlife Service will not be recommending the need for any type of compensatory mitigation for this wetland loss. We view the preferred alternative as a "minimal" wetland impact that would be eligible for a Corps' General Permit and not require any compensation.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this Draft EA. If you would like to discuss any of these comments, please call me at (207) 827-5938.

cc: Jay Clement, COE - Manchester, ME
Dan Arsenault, USEPA - Boston, MA

ES:WMahaney(Stillwat.mem)

1/26/99

Thank you for coming up with
alternative 4 which has taken
into consideration the concerns
of the residential area near
Stillwater Avenue.

Pam Taylor
74 Henderson
Banger 02801

BANGOR, I-95 and Stillwater Ave. Interchange

PIN 4926.00

January 26, 1999 Public Hearing

Name (Optional) _____

Address Bangor resident

Comment:

alternative # 4
great idea!!

Please place your comments in the box by the exit or mail to:

Judith Lindsey-Foster, Maine Department of Transportation, Office of Environmental Services,
16 SHS, Augusta, Maine 04333-0016.

Comments are due no later than: **February 11, 1999.**

BANGOR, I-95 and Stillwater Ave. Interchange

PIN 4926.00

January 26, 1999 Public Hearing

Name (Optional)

Fred Boyce

Address

48 Spruce St - BANGOR

Comment:

The main problem is the junction of
Hogan, Springer & Bangor Mall - these 2 roads
Springer & Bangor Mall subject to location by Bangor
Planning - This proposal is limited improvements -
causes more problems on residential Stillwater Ave
Increased volume of traffic on I-95 requires
additional lanes by 2020 year - T4 Lins 1991
report noted 80% or more of traffic getting
on I-95 southbound at Broadway got off
at Union - thus URBAN ARTERIAL - Need
to obtain alternate route to Springfield
The Bangor Mall - than Stillwater, I-95 and State
St - Work on a collector road across
to City Airport in Hasen Boulevard area on
Essex to Griffin - divided Hwy like Godfrey
Diip - This reduces the traffic volume on I-95 and
requires work with DEPOT of 95 major wet lands
are involved -

Please place your comments in the box by the exit or mail to:

Judith Lindsey-Foster, Maine Department of Transportation, Office of Environmental Services,
16 SHS, Augusta, Maine 04333-0016.

Comments are due no later than: February 11, 1999.

I regret your report did not
include MeDOT Engr Salk
map established in 1960's + used
to locate I-95 Avenue to Houlton

48 Juniper St.
Bangor, Maine 04401
February 10, 1999

Maine Department of Transportation
State House Station 16
Augusta, Me. 04333-0016

Attn: Ms. Judith Lindsey-Foster
Office of Environmental Services

Re: Environmental Assessment, PIN 4926.00,
Fed. #IR-I-IM-NH-95-8(155)

Dear Ms. Lindsey:

I live adjacent to Stillwater Avenue in Bangor, Maine. Your report does not provide sufficient evidence that this project would not have undue adverse effect on the property adjacent to the project and those using Stillwater Avenue - specifically I find:

1. The Interstate interchange is a $\frac{3}{4}$ interchange not addressing onbound I-95 to I-95 northbound. The interchange should be complete (the wetlands won't go away).
2. The interchange provides direct access to a commercial development. There are 2 right lanes (going north along Stillwater) in this area already. The first right lane provides access to the south entrance to the Bangor Mall and is less than 300 ft. long. The second right lane is for the north entrance to the Mall by Filenes. It is clearly marked "Lane Must Turn Right". This mode of design is beginning to frustrate drivers who try to obey traffic laws only to find others passing on the right and then accelerating into the thru lane.
3. There are but 2 lanes on Stillwater Avenue. Your design suggests there will be 5 lanes for a short distance with shoulders on the outside and a rebuilt sidewalk on the easterly side. On the Saturday before Christmas 1998 (12/19/98). The Bangor Daily News reported there was a grid lock on I-95 NBL and I-95 SBL due to cross traffic controlled by traffic lights at Springer and Bangor Mall Blvd. with Hogan Road.

Stillwater Ave. was also in grid lock. I needed to go around to Essex St. to cross Stillwater traffic. With a traffic light added to the new exit onto Stillwater traffic will back up more on the northbound lane of Stillwater. Traffic southbound headed for I-95 and entrance to the NBL will not be able to turn left and thus cause delays and confusion with this traffic either going further into Bangor, right turn onto Broadway then to I-95 Broadway entrance. More intown traffic. Some of these cars may try to turn around and/or use Howard, Mt. Hope, Hogan to gain access northward. An interstate interchange should address all concerns for traffic.

4. "No left turns onto Stillwater Avenue" from the new interchange, the city government is governed by a city council elected. You only need to review your environmental statements and hearing minutes on the recently constructed Bangor-Brewer bridge." "Those entering from Brewer will all need to turn right and use the existing rotary traffic; Washington, Hancock, Oak." Within 6 months of opening the Bangor city council allowed 1 lane right turn and one lane onto Oak St. towards State St. I would also note that the BDN, page B-3 dated 11/15/95 Bangor was given the right to change zoning of State lands of BMHI from "government and Institutional" to "Residential". The State nor Federal can not say the left turn will not be allowed. Why should it not be allowed except it would "drain" people from the business sector. Many people are tired of these business deals and thus the revitalization of "downtown Bangor". Left turns should be allowed for access to Acadia Hospital and St. Joseph's Hospital on Broadway. This adds problems to your traffic figures south of I-95 crossing of Stillwater Ave.

5. The report does not address the real concerns. Increased traffic will require I-95 to be widened before year 2020. Why is this so - increased traffic figures are greater in the Bangor area of I-95 than those on Stillwater Ave. of I-95 in Old Town and I-95 and Coldbrook Road to the south. Why - the Ty Lin report in the early 1990's provided part of the answer: of the traffic entering the SBL of I-95 from Broadway, traffic counters found that above 80% got off at the next exit Union St. On NBL the same was true except they went to Hogan Road. Thus I-95 is serving urban Bangor traffic. While hindsight is great and I can boast that I proposed a circumferencial highway to the Mall dated 1968, I will advise you that there is still a route which will take time but could be used to provide access to the Mall other than the 2 existing 50 plus year routes of Stillwater and State. This route would go across Gilman Road to Essex. It's wetlands but is the shortest and new wet lands could be migrated as well as noting the new dual lane road would help pond the water in the wetlands to a uniform level. A UMO study report of I-95 on the Alton Bog crossing of I-95 in the mid 1960's would support this effort but take time. Your other alternate with no relief road would be to add another lane to I-95 N & SB lanes from I-395 to Chase Rd. with overpasses each costing ±\$2.million. Total costs \$30-50 million.

It is still possible to turn the I-95 Hogan Rd. exit NB into Cloverleafs although City officials would lose some taxable income which has not reduce out taxes to date. Sylvan Road would be relocated behind Darlings and pick up EMVT's road. A new I-95 NBL off ramp would

swing wide enough to allow Hogan NBL traffic to enter the circle onto I-95. Bridges would cross wetlands and one small recently roller skate rink building moved. The I-95 off ramp would require more iniquity to get to Hogan around "Sam's" etc.

Looking at some of the Interstate exits and entrances in the NY city area. I know these types of entrances could now be made because prior planners were short sighted. Perhaps why Engineers never agreed with planners and vice-verse and why I am concerned this interchange is not valid. Lets do our work to correct our problems not a partial solution which greatly effects the residential features of the environment surrounding the Bangor Mall.

The I-95 Stillwater Interchange in the City of Bangor adversely effects the residents of Bangor. Your report does not address the problems on Stillwater Avenue.

Respectfully submitted,


Fred Boyce

bep

cc: Paul Lariviere, FHWA